DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 175 072 CS 502 610

AUTHOR Rubin, Lucille S.
TITLE Stage Voice Training in the London Schools.
INSTITUTION State Univ. of New York, Purchase. Coll. at Purchase.
SPONS AGENCY State Univ. of New York Research Foundation, Albany.
PUB DATE 78
NOTE 37p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Acting; *Course Content; *Dramatics; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Speech Instruction; *Teaching Techniques; *Theater Arts
IDENTIFIERS *England (London)

ABSTRACT

This report is the result of a six-week study in which the voice training offerings at four schools of drama in London were examined using interviews of teachers and directors, observation of voice classes, and attendance at studio presentations and public performances. The report covers such topics as: textbooks and references being used; courses in theory; training given in alignment, posture, and body shape; the amount of time spent in classes on relaxation and limbering; how breathing is taught; when sound production is initiated; when and how resonance is taught; exploration of range, head voice, and falsetto; the use of the scream, cry, and laugh; the speech standards that are prevalent; use of the bone prop; when and how dialect work is done; the use of text work; the combining of voice and movement; how singing is taught; vocal routines expected outside the classroom; common problems the instructors encounter; how vocal progress is assessed; how the schools conduct auditions; administrative particulars of the schools studied; and what personal approaches to instruction the teachers used even though many had similar training backgrounds themselves. (TJ)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED175072

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Stage Voice Training in the London Schools

by

Lucille S. Rubin, Ph.D.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Lucille S. Rubin

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 502 610

Summer 1978

The author wishes to acknowledge the State University of New York Research Foundation for funding this study; also the Theatre Speech & Voice Program of the University & College Theatre Association, a division of the American Theatre Association for the printing costs.

Introduction

The Research Foundation of the State University of New York awarded me a fellowship and grant in aid to study stage voice training in the London schools for six weeks during the summer of 1978. The purpose of the study was to examine the voice training offered in selected schools, to become familiar with some of the approaches used in the training, and to discover the place of voice work in each training program. Because the nature of the study is informative rather than comparative or evaluative, the four schools represented will be referred to as A, B, C, and D; these letters do not correspond to the alphabetical listing that follows.

The four schools represented in this study are the Central School of Speech and Drama, the London Academy of Dramatic Art (LAMDA), the Rose Brueford School of Speech and Drama, and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art (RADA)[1]. In general, my procedure was to (1) interview the teachers or administrative director, (2) observe voice classes, and (3) attend both studio (in-house) presentations and public performances.

Prof. Lucille S. Rubin teaches voice for the professional actor training program at the State University of New York, Purchase, New York. She received her M.A. from Northwestern University and her Ph.D. from New York University, and is currently serving the American Theatre Association as Vice-President of the Voice/Movement/Acting/Directing Program of the University and College Theatre Association. Dr. Rubin is also a private voice coach and the editor of a recently published book, Movement for the Actor.

There are many variables in this study. In particular, the reader should keep the following in mind:

Unlike Programs: Three of the drama schools offer a three-year training program, whereas the fourth offers a two-year program. Two schools conduct short summer courses for overseas students while another offers a one-year program for foreign students. Some schools operate on a semester basis while others use a term structure.

Unequal Observation Time: Most of the time was spent at schools A and B. Observations were made between June 19 and August 4, during which time some schools were ending the spring term while others were beginning the summer session.

Nonconstant Set of Teachers: The teaching staff varied with the school in that some teachers who taught during the spring term did not teach during the summer term. Observations of some teachers were made over a brief period, while other teachers were observed over a much longer period.

Nonconstant Set of Students: Some students were finishing their training while others were arriving to begin their training. Some classes were composed entirely of English students, others entirely of foreign students; in some instances classes were composed of both English and foreign students. In addition, students were observed at various stages of their training.

Unlike Courses/Classes: Voice training at the schools included many different offerings: basic voice production, theory, verse, text, speeches, poetry, interpretation, singing, applied voice, etc. Also, some classes were large (10-15) while others were small (3-4).

Because of these variables, this study does not represent the complete training program of any of the schools; instead, it details the nature and factors contributing to the training offered in all of the schools.

In an effort to provide some parameters for the study, a 6-page questionnaire containing 54 questions was used when interviewing teachers and administrators. In some cases the form was left with the teacher to be filled out and returned, but

generally the form was used as an outline for the initial interview. The views of at least two voice teachers at each school were solicited. Discussion periods frequently followed the interviews; these helped clarify and extend ideas that had been discussed only briefly during the interviews.

Rather than dealing with the 54 questions that appear on the questionnaire, I have attempted to discuss this information under specific headings, including impressions gained from observation as well as information obtained from the questionnaire. This discussion is followed by a summary of conclusions based on these findings.

Textbooks

Textbooks are used in three of the four schools. School A uses no text, while B asks that all students read Voice and the Actor.[2] The book is used as a general reference text from time to time during the three-year training period. At school C one teacher refers to The Speech Chain when teaching theory.[3] School D formerly used Training the Speaking Voice but currently uses Voice and Speech in the Theatre and The Voice.[4] Xeroxed material is abundant in all of the schools and is frequently used in text courses. Students taking these courses often bring their own materials to class, or the teacher may provide optional selections.

Theory: Physiology and Anatomy

In school A, which has no formal course in voice theory, one teacher finds that she must deal with many questions relating

to voice production. She may use a class period to answer these questions or try to deal with them in tutorials. Some questions are answered in the process of exploring vocal exercises.

School B does not offer any courses in theory. One teacher at school C is especially concerned that the students understand the physiology of the voice, and this teacher spends time at the beginning of the initial term dealing with this information. This work, however, is covered more fully by the school's speech therapist, who is a permanent member of the staff. A second teacher at school C formerly lectured on voice production but has recently become "more chary" of doing this. He believes that "the students can get hung up on naming muscles and that this can, at times, get in the way of experiencing." School D requires a one-term course in theory that deals with the anatomy and physiology of the voice.

Alignment, Posture, and Body Shape

Most of the instructors at school A received training in the Alexander Technique; consequently, they try to bring this awareness into all of their classes in voice, movement, and acting. There are no separate classes in alignment or body correctives at this school.

School B "deals with alignment and relates it to movement classes"; however, no courses are taught under any of these titles, nor is anyone on the staff a specialist in this field. Most of the students who felt that they needed work in this area took private lessons at the nearby London Alexander Technique

Center. One of the administrators of school B noted that "the school does not impose the Technique, but if the students want this training they are encouraged to seek it out on their own."

At school C there are two permanent Alexander teachers on the staff who supply a liaison between movement and voice training. Here the Technique is very much a part of the total acting program and has been for the past thirteen years. Upon entry the students receive the training three times a week for five weeks. All the work is on an individual basis because the teachers believe that the Technique cannot be taught on a class basis. A second teacher at this school bases much of his voice work on "release," which comes out of the Alexander Technique. "If someone," he noted, "is in the right shape, they are more likely to breathe well."

School D offers no courses in body correctives or alignment but leans heavily on Rudolf Laban's effort shape.

Observation of actors in studio and public presentations seemed to point out that the programs that place less emphasis on body alignment tend to produce actors with nonneutral bodies. Jutting chins, sunken chests, arched necks or backs, and walks that reveal personal mannerisms were observed in actors who had not had training in body correctives and/or alignment.

Relaxation/Limbering

The amount of time spent on relaxation within a class period varies from one school to another, with some teachers using the first 5 minutes of the period and others up to 20 minutes.

School C, which has only two or three students in some voice classes, works on a highly individual basis; therefore, relaxation is thought of as a continual process, with no set time given to it at the beginning of the period. The amount of class time used for body limbering ranges from 5 to 20 minutes in all of the schools, with the majority of voice classes beginning with body stretching and limbering exercises.

Breathing

Three of the schools introduce some form of rib/intercostal breathing "from the beginning," "the first day," or "within the first month." The fourth school teaches alignment for the first half of the term and then begins rib/intercostal breathing. All four schools teach rib/intercostal breathing separately from and simultaneously with diaphragmatic breathing. No one who was interviewed or observed teaches rib/reserve breathing.[5]

With respect to the question as to whether the instructor encourages active, muscular contraction of abdominal muscles or a soft center for exhalation, replies varied: "Both, depending on individual needs;" "softened and relaxed center;" "depends on what it takes to do the job--just staying open...No need to tighten or push the center." Another teacher noted that she encourages her students to be aware of a diaphragmatic muscle contraction rather than a softened, relaxed center.

Initiation of Sound

Students at three of the four schools begin to produce

sound either on the first day or early in the first term. School C precedes voice production with a session on the physiology and anatomy of the voice accompanied by visual aids. School D offers a course in theory prior to voice production classes; sound initiation is introduced within the first week of voice production course.

In general, it appeared that students began to phonate without long preparatory session of mind/body exercises or long periods of kinesthetic/sensory work.

Resonance

In three of the four schools, work on resonance begins the first time the basic voice class meets. The subject is dealt with again in a more detailed way later in the term. One school begins resonance work after four weeks of basic voice training. Here, one teacher approaches resonance through singing and then brings that kinesthetic experience into the neck, chest, and mask. A second teacher does not begin resonance work in a specific cavity but, rather, works to open the area in which the student seems most deficient. This teacher attempts to achieve a balance rather than encouraging resonance in selected areas. A third teacher also noted that she does not select particular resonating chambers but works simultaneously for mask, pharyngeal, and mouth resonance.

All of the schools tend to emphasize mask resonance. This may be due to English, in contrast to American, cultural values regarding sound. Two teachers pointed out that the American

student tends to use an abundance of pharyngeal resonance. One teacher believes that this can be attributed to American singing techniques being carried over into the speaking voice.

Range, Head Voice, and Falsetto

School A, in a technical voice class called "Vocal Play," offers the actor a chance to explore the voice "from the outside in." "This class," noted the teacher, "has been most helpful in getting the actor to discover his range potential through vocal play and pitch manipulation." During some class periods the actor uses only a very high pitch, a very low pitch, or a falsetto voice (or whatever has been selected for that session). The instructor believes that in this way the students discover the effects of the voice on the body and/or the character.

At school B the teachers occasionally separate male and female voices for work on range. One teacher feels that such a division is helpful for females who need to explore a lower pitch range and for males who are seeking to explore higher pitch levels. At this school range exploration and use of the head voice lead into the scream and the cry. Following particular exercises, one teacher immediately applies newly discovered pitch ranges to text; she finds the poetry of Edith Sitwell particularly helpful in opening up both the top and the bottom of the student's range. Another teacher uses games, such as dueling with sound, to encourage range exploration.

The teachers at school C feel that English actors are receptive to use of the head voice, top range, and falsetto,

although they occasionally have some "die-hards" who are not eager to explore range potential. These teachers pointed out that some actors fear the use of the head voice and therefore return to the security of lower pitches. Because students frequently appear in Restoration roles, it is felt that the voice training should provide the actor with easy access to upper registers and extended range.

One teacher in school A reported that both sexes are eager to explore the top of the voice, while a second teacher there says that the females in her class seem more receptive to this work than the males. Both teachers divide their classes into males and females for some of the work on range because "alike-group situations" encourage the student to break through personal pitch boundaries.

School C has detected no difference betwee male and female receptivity to high-range exploration; the only differences cited were found in students who entered the school with a dialect that is characteristically wide in melodic range. These students seemed more secure in the upper registers of the voice.

School D cited "lack of range" as a common vocal problem but did not respond to specific questions that dealt with range. Students from this school used wide pitch ranges in public and in-house productions, but seemed to lack connection with their emotional centers.

The Scream, Cry and Laugh

At school A the students explore the scream, cry, and laugh

only if they are called for in a role that they are working on at the time. One of the teachers at this school teaches these skills through improvisation in a classroom situation.

At school B the teachers have designated class periods in which to teach these skills. Here the students begin with vocal limbering, move into a variety of pitches, and work into a cry, which leads, finally, to the scream. A second teacher sets up a situation in which "something terrible is about to happen" and uses this improvisational background to encourage the student to fill in details and find his or her own motivation. An analysis of the scream (or the cry or laugh) follows; this, when broken down, reveals changing breath patterns, regular and irregular pauses, and so forth. The student then has the options of building a scream from components discovered through analysis, deriving the scream from a motivating situation, or combining these approaches.

At one time school C offered selected classes or sessions in laughing and screaming, but this work is now done in tutorials. The voice coaches at this school believe that even though the scream may be a technical skill, the student must work from motivation.

School D approaches the laugh, cry, and scream through exercises and text work.

Speech Standards

In England standard English is referred to as "received pronunciation." Two of the four schools teach the IPA

(international phonetic alphabet). At school D the students study the IPA for two years, with an optional third year. Some students who have attended school D go on to seek a separate diploma in IPA proficiency at the London Academy.

The students at the schools using the IPA are asked to use the symbols in writing, transcribing, and reading. The two schools that do not subscribe to the use of the IPA frequently use Clifford Turner's vowel chart, which presents lip and tongue positions for vowels and dipthongs.[6]

At school A regionalisms are not dealt with until the second year. The teachers at this school feel that it is important to give the voice a chance "to develop slowly and naturally through the classes and to allow the first acting studies to come from the source which is most natural to the student." They also contend that students need time to appreciate the need to change an accent or add a new one. By the end of the first year, the teachers believe, students will have developed some speech "references" and will be more likely to want to work on their own regionalisms.

School B begins work on regionalisms late in the first year. One teacher at this school teaches the Turner vowel chart, which she feels "encourages awareness in shaping sound." One of the administrators of this school, who also teaches voice, pointed out that "the school teaches received pronunciation not as a corrective measure but as an adoption of another dialect." This approach, he feels, "allows the student to keep his own melody patterns and vocal coloring." The received pronunciation thus

becomes a vocal choice growing out of the needs of a particular script.

School C tries to make the student aware of regionalisms through taping and ear training and hopes that "the student will eventually want to do something about it." If the student is receptive, work on regionalisms begins "at once." Because this school has small classes and its speech work is frequently tutorial, private needs can readily be met.

At School D work on regionalisms begins early in the first term "in order to allow for steady development." The catalog (in-house) states that "the student must study phonetics (terms 1-3) and learn the IPA." The student must also transcribe from diction and read from phonetic text; she or he also examines consonant sounds and some regional variations, as well as "principal faults in defective and foreign speakers." During the following terms (4-6) the student transcribes from advanced diction and studies "assimilation, coalescence, elision, and gradation." Also during those terms, the actor studies "the phoneme and the allophones, and comparisions are made between allophonic and phonemic transcriptions." In addition, actors study "the vowel chart, primary and secondary cardinal vowel sounds, intonation, and a comparison of methods in recording intonation."

The Bone Prop

The bone prop is not used by any of the teachers in school A. School B used the prop, though one teacher, who trained with

it feels that it could set up tension if not used correctly.[7] Students at this school frequently buy their own props and bring them to class. One teacher indicated that she does not introduce the prop in class but either deals with it if the student brings one in or works with that student in a tutorial session. This teacher feels that the prop can be helpful if it is used correctly.

The bone prop is used by one of the two teachers interviewed at school C. This teacher who trained with it, believes it is helpful to some students. He occasionally introduces it in class as the need arises.

At school D some teachers use the prop and others do not.

Diction is strongly stressed in all of the schools. In all productions, in-house or public, all of their actors can be heard easily. Articulation tends to be crisp and precise without sounding pendantic or "speechy." Much of the English clarity of speech and ease of projection can perhaps be credited not only to easy use of rib breathing but also to distinct, clear articulation.[8]

It is interesting to note that voice and speech are taught as one subject area, with special classes devoted to the study of dialects.

Dialects

At three of the four schools dialect work begins in the first term of the second year. School C begins this work during the second term of the first year.

School A does not ask students to study a particular number of dialects; school B requires four, school C requires six, but the students must also be able to master any additional dialects that a director may ask for. School D asks students to learn five dialects.

At schools A and B dialects are taught primarily through ear training. School C also uses ear training; however, it is felt that some students need the IPA "to help jog their memory." School D uses both ear training and the IPA.

The students in the training school frequently serve as English-dialect models. If a particular dialect is being used in an upcoming production, the students who speak that dialect are frequently called upon to serve as "teachers" of the other students. At schpol B, where the IPA is not used in teaching dialects, the students are especially helpful to one another. At the time of this study there were students with Scottish, Irish (Dublin), Birmingham, Cockney, and Welsh dialects at this school. This approach to dialect study seems to encourage pride in one's native sounds and also helps students who want to acquire the received pronunciation. Thus, dialect training, when seen as part of the problem of dealing with regionalisms, suggests to the student that regionalism is not something that she or he must eradicate but something to be cherished.

The director of school A said that authenticity in some English dialects is discouraged because those dialects are unintelligible to some audiences. Native English speakers frequently cannot understand some of their own countrymen, as

some dialects not only are "thick" but are spoken and understood only in a limited geographic area.

Text Work

Text work may fall under a variety of course titles-"Verse," "Poetry and Prose," "Interpretation," "Theatre Voice"-and may take the form of choral reading, monologs, or speeches. At some schools a studio presentation may be selections from a single poet or a presentation built around a topic, a work of art, or a single word.

In addition to participating in text classes, students spend some time on text in the basic introductory voice course, in which the teacher may introduce choral reading, poetry, monologs, or speeches. Work on some form of text was evident in all the voice classes observed, regardless of the course title, with a great deal of training time allocated to voice classes and "getting the word off the page."

At school A text work is done with varying degrees of frequency, usually "once a week." At school B text work is of primary importance for one teacher, who believes that it "shows the student where the voice is weak, and then she or he is more eager to return to voice exercises." At school C one teacher responded that he aims "to get to the text" in every class; a second teacher at the same school reported that he "always tries to do some text work but that he does not get to it every class period." This teacher also feels that the voice courses in some ways have to fill the educational "gaps" for students who arrive

with a limited background in poetry, Shakespearean plays, and Restoration comedy.

School D deals directly with text and has a clear program of work in this area. One of the school's model programs in vocal interpretation (adapted from its in-house catalog) includes the following:

Term 1: Work on short poems with a subjective element with the goal of identifying and expressing the personal emotions contained in the text. Contemporary texts are selected initially because of the immediacy of the language and the topicality of the subject matter. The aim is to encourage and develop a natural style of delivery.

Term 2: Narrative verse, including the ballad form and dramatic monologs, is used to develop the ability to communicate with the audience. The student is encouraged to deal with the form as well as the story element found in the ballad.

Term 3: The many forms of the sonnet are used. Elements covered in previous terms are found in the sonnet. Strict technical considerations are important, including not only brevity (which calls for concise habits of thought in the speaker) but also greater strictness of form (which demands consideration of metre, rhythm, pauses, and phrasing).

Term 4: The longer narrative poem (e.g., epic) dealing with significant actions is introduced. The aim of this term's work is to develop the speaker's ability to sustain a narrative text. Work with comic verse, including mock epic and mock heroic style, is also done during this term.

Term 5: Longer poems, more subjective in content and of complex metrical and stancaic form, are prepared. Some poems, such as odes and elegies, are important more for intention and tone than for their form. The student is expected to be able to sustain a text with a strong emotional content.

Term 6: Texts that make intellectual and technical demands on the speaker are of primary concern during this term. Tutors may choose texts of suitable difficulty that are related to the student's needs.

Term 7: Texts are selected according to the needs of the individual student with the goal of extending range. When a satisfactory standard of work has been achieved, the student may elect to work on texts related to her or his literature studies.

Term 8: The students are divided into four separate groups and four different kinds of programs are developed with a tutor. These programs incorporate other dramatic media (e.g., improvisation, movement, mime, prose, music and sound); each group presents its program to the rest of the students.

All four schools emphasize the place of text work in the voice training program, allotting ample time to such work and offering a variety of courses. Text finds its way into all voice courses, including the basic introductory courses.

Tutorials

School A offers two to five hours of tutorials per term in the first year; in the second year each student receives five or six hours. At school B, where tutorials are voluntary for some students and mandatory for others, the first-year student receives a half-hour tutorial every week. (Sometimes the instructor may tutor two or three students who have similar problems.) In the second year small-group work replaces most tutorials; in the third year students are on their own but may be given tutorial time for specific problems.

School C indicated that it offers tutorial time, but because most of the classes are small (sometimes only two or three students), the need for tutorials is not great. School D schedules tutorials in the first and second year only for "weaker students," while in the third year, the students receive an hour and a half of tutorials each week.

The Sequence of Training

At school A one voice teacher offers the following:

First Year: Breath centered, main faults corrected, ear training.

Second Year: Expansion of range and resonance, flexibility of tone leading to voice transformations.

Third Year: Dialects taught by tutor.

At school B one teacher reported the following training sequence:

First Year: Relaxation, breath, physical building of the voice.

Second Year: Interpretation and continued voice exercises. Relate voice work to plays and to style. Text includes epilogs and prologs. Dialect work begins.

Third Year: This year is geared to selling oneself to the market. Emphasis is placed on radio, television, and productions. No voice classes are taught; rather, tutorials are used to meet immediate needs or prepare audition material.

Another teacher at school B, who teaches only the first-year students, uses the following sequence: "relaxation, breath, tone, note, and the word." All basic voice work is completed during the first year, while the second year of training deals specifically with diction and dialects.

At school C the following progression is offered within the first year: Body Shape (alignment), use of breath, the note and the word. At this school most of the voice work is completed in the first year, while the second year is directed toward production needs.

At school D the following training sequence occurs (adapted from the school's in-house catalog):

Term 1: Practical basic technique--posture, relaxation, control of areas of body related to voice production, capacity and control of breath, development and awareness of balanced tone, correct positioning of the organs of articulation. Also, theory is taught in terms of anatomy and physiology of the voice. Voice is recorded upon entry.

Term 2: Basic techniques; use of words in narration and characterization through storytelling.

Term 3: Basic techniques; also, combined voice and movement work leading to a study of verbal dynamics. Sight reading; oral interpretation of texts. Voice is recorded at end of term and compared with recording made upon entry.

Term 4: Use of voice under stress due to emotion, age, character, etc. Projection of voice and thought in varying circumstances. Vocal sound and speech games in the training of the actor. Improvised and formal speech situations. Specific problems related to rehearsal work.

Term 5: Individual use of tape recorders for objective self-assessment. Style of delivery related to dramatic texts. Ear training. Acquisition of six dialects. Problems encountered in rehearsal work.

Terms 7 and 8: Extension of individual vocal potential, development of individual routine, and tutorials on rehearsal problems.

Voice and Movement

All four schools offer movement courses that are separate and distinct from their voice courses, yet all of the teachers interviewed reported that they incorporate some form of "body movement" or "body use" into their voice classes either directly or indirectly.

At school A one teacher reported that although movement is a separate class, she does incorporate selected movement exercises into her voice classes. A second instructor noted that she uses

movement "when appropriate" to a voice exercise.

The voice and movement teachers at this school frequently team-teach classes; the movement instructor prepares the body by warming it up and making it flexible, after which the voice teacher takes over the class. Because she has either observed or in some cases participated in the body warmup, she may incorporate some of the body exercises into her vocal limbering.

This school (A) makes body movement part of every voice class. A great deal of emphasis is placed on allowing the breath to move the body and on achieving a connection with breath, sound, feeling, and movement. This emphasis is the core of the training at this school, and it is evidenced in class work, studio presentations, and productions. This view is supported by the voice, movement, acting, and singing teachers and seems to give their actors a special "connected" quality on stage.

In addition to the courses just described, school A offers the following courses in movement:

First Year: Movement for the actor; jazz and tap.

Second Year: Fencing, tumbling, acrobatics, and stage combat.

At school B the voice and movement instructors work closely with each other, not only on basic limbering but also on text work. For example, the voice teacher may work on a choral selection and, when she feels that the class is ready, ask the movement teacher to help choreograph it. The students then take the choral selection to the movement class, where the teacher helps them bring the text physically alive in person and in space.

Also at school B, a session in "applied voice" may be held either in the studio or on stage. This work applies to the movement called for within a scene, with emphasis on bringing together the voice and movement of the character.

A school C the teachers tr, to teach voice and movement "indirectly," although a separate course is offered under that name. At school D one term of voice and movement is required.

It is apparent that the phrase "voice and movement" is something of a catchall, as it seemed to mean different things to different teachers. The basic voice classes in all of the schools use movement for warmup, limbering or release, or in an attempt to keep the body and voice "connected." Few sound and movement games are played. One of the graduate students at school A said that he is indebted to his training because it never separated the voice from the body. Productions from the school seemed to bear this out--the actors seemed strongly connected to their "centers," integrating breath, voice, movement, and emotion.

Singing

Singing is an integral part of the training in all four schools. Students take singing classes, study privately with a teacher on the staff, and may also engage in singing exercises in the regular speaking-voice classes.

School A places strong emphasis on singing and frequently includes musicals among its in-house and public presentations. The students at this school study singing in some form durino

most of their training; in term 1 of the second year, they concentrate on musical theatre, including the nineteenth-century music hall sounds. The training includes getting close to the language and the word as well as learning the music of the period; consequently, much time is spent on the role of inflection and stress. In term 2 of the second year, Broadway musicals, especially the songs of Cole Porter and Rogers and Hart are sung in class. Students are also encouraged to write their own lyrics--or improvise them in class. In term 3 of the second year, the students study voices on records and develop their listening skills.

School B does not incorporate singing exercises into its voice classes; however, it has a strong singing program. The three singing teachers on the staff teach classes but not private study. At this school the student takes a singing course during each of the three years of training.

Quite the reverse is true of school C, which offers private study with a singing teacher but does not offer courses in singing. At school D the students take two singing courses, which meet for one hour each week. After the third year singing is optional and is available only on a private basis. Private study may be taken either within or outside the school.

Establishing a Vocal Routine Outside the Classroom

At school A one teacher reported that she makes no specific demands on her students in terms of a daily warmup, except for students who have particular problems. A second teacher suggests

to her students that they maintain a daily vocal limbering routine, but does not suggest a specific amount of time. She recommends exercises and asks students to make up some of their own to add to the daily routine.

One instructor at school B asks students to do vocal limbering for 15 to 20 minutes a day. At this school, the students are familiar with the Cicely Berry warmup exercises and frequently meet before class to do these warmups on their own.[9]

At school C one teacher does not request outside class limbering but, rather, has students do ten minutes of vocal limbering in class every day and finish with text work. A second teacher at school C gives his students a framework for their personal out-of-class limbering: (1) shape of the body, (2) breath exercises, (3) resonance, (4) word. The framework is variable, with emphasis on particular areas to meet individual needs.

At school D the students are encouraged to maintain a daily 30-minute vocal limbering routine outside of class. In their third year the students are given a limbering "ritual" that they "will hopefully take with them upon graduation to fit their changing needs."

Maintaining vocal discipline seems to be part of the training in all four schools. Because all the schools offer voice classes every day, a student is likely to get some kind of vocal warmup during the class periods; however, in some schools the vocal limbering class does not meet daily.

Outside Assignments

At school A students may be asked to do selected voice exercises each day to help them with a specific problem. At school B one instructor assigns 25 minutes of prose, poetry, or drama based on a painting or a work of art, to be shared at the end of the term or whenever it can be scheduled. School D assigns individual limbering and preparation of text material. All of the schools have some kind of presentation at the end of the term or year. This may take the form of a monolog, a prose or poetry selection, a speech, or a group presentation.

Common Problems

One teacher listed the following problems: (1) problems related to use of the breath and (2) problems related to a closed throat. "The real problem," she added, "is one in which a student is unable to achieve sensory awareness of her or his voice."

A second teacher feels that the number of common problems is "too long to list" but noted that "breath support is one of the root problems." A third listed the following: (1) vocal quality, for example, hypernasality; (2) vocal placement; (3) tension in jaw, head, neck; (4) lack of flexibility in tongue tip and lips. Still another instructor believes that the most common problems are "those related to bad use of the body and voice." He added, "people stand in the way of what they are built to produce. They have the voice, but our job [as voice teachers] is to clear out the rubbish--that which gets in the way." A

fourth reply cited limited range, nasality, lack of resonance, backward tone, and poor articulation as common vocal problems. A final answer came from a teacher who feels that the biggest problems her actors have to deal with are learning "to project and develop a dynamic voice, and to be able to refine volume levels."

Assessment of Vocal Progress

At school A all assessment is oral and takes the form of a "critique" following in-house and public performances. This is usually done with all or most of the members of the staff, as well as the student, present. The staff also has weekly meetings in which the student's work is discussed.

School B uses much the same procedure as school A. The faculty assesses what the student has done on stage and then meets with the student. This discussion takes place two times during the term; in addition, smaller oral assessments are given frequently throughout the term.

At school C a test given halfway through the training provides a yardstick for both faculty and student. In addition to this test, graded performances in productions and a written assessment following terms 2 and 4 are used to evaluate progress. The written assessment (which consists of about 50 words) tells the student what she or he needs to work on. The teachers pointed out that they believe it is more important to give the student a face-to-face critique following a performance than to provide a lengthy written assessment weeks later.

School D also issues a written evaluation, part of which assesses the student's performance in an oral speech test. Students are evaluated by the permanent staff (internal assessment) and by appointed examiners (external assessment). In general, the student must saitsfy the examiners that the voice is well produced and that articulation is clear. He or she must show the ability to handle a range of material, both verse and prose, and appreciation of a variety of styles. At some point the student must demonstrate that he or she can speak Standard English. When students fail to achieve Standard English, it is noted on their award.[10] Private discussions follow the written assessments.

Auditioning

Two of the schools require the voice instructors to be present at auditions. At school A at least one voice teacher must be present, while school B does not require a certain number. At school C the voice teachers formerly sat in on all auditions, but this procedure has been abolished. At school D the voice coaches are requested to be part of the auditioning process. At the schools where the voice instructor(s) are asked to participate (A, B, and D), those teachers also help in the selection of incoming students.

One teacher at school A reported that in selecting actors for the school the staff listens for "talent, and trainability, hoping that whatever the voice is, that it can be trained." A second teacher added that "the only unacceptable voices are those that are very foreign or very damaged." A teacher at school D

listens "for a natural speaking voice."

At school A matching pitches, an ear test, a vocal improvisation, and singing are all part of the audition. If necessary, an inflection test, a rhythm test, and examination of the student's oral cavity may be included at callback time.

At school B the students do a vocal improvisation, sight read, and sing. Callbacks (40 to 50 students) spend an entire morning in a second audition in which they work for one hour with the voice teachers and for one hour with the acting teachers. The voice teacher handles ear tests at this session.

School D asks students to do a "cold" reading and to present audition material, but does not ask them to sing. The students take ear tests that include matching ptiches on the piano. Three voice teachers participate in this process.

Some of the schools use a prepared written form in auditioning final candidates.

Administrative Particulars

Number of Students in Program: The number of students ranged from 60 to 122. School A had 90 students; school B, 72; school C, 80; and school D, 122. School A staffs 4 or 5 voice teachers; school B, 6; school C, 7; and school D, 8. Most of the teachers are full time, but a small percentage are part time.

Training of Faculty: Most of the acting faculty at all of the schools have had voice and speech training. At

school B this is particularly important because the the acting teachers frequently lead voice warmups. At school D all the faculty have received actor training at a training school or university, and part of that training included voice study.

Average Age of Student: The average age of a student upon entry at school A is 20 years; at school B, 24; at school C, 18 or 19; and at school D, 20.

Number of Students in a Voice Class: The number varies. School A has 14 or 15 students in a class; school B has a maximum of 12; school C has 2 or 3 students in some classes, while others are larger; and school D has 7 or 8 students in most basic classes but as many as 12 in others.

Frequency and Length of Class Periods: At school A voice classes meet four times a week for 45 minutes. Students at this school must also take other voice courses, such as text, verse, prose, and singing. At school B the voice class meets four or five times a week for an hour; the students also have courses in singing, voice, dialect, text, and voice movement, or they may have a tutorial. At school C the voice class meets for 1 hour every day in terms 1 and 2, four times a week in terms 3 and 4; and three times a week in term 5; in terms 6 and 7 the students may take advantage of an "availability period." During these last two terms it is the responsibility of the student to seek out a teacher if she or he wants extra help. At school D the students meet three times

a week for a one-hour voice class in their first and second years. In their third year they meet two hours a week, during which time they study with each of the three teachers.

Returning Graduates: Graduates who are between engagements, out of work, or in need of a refresher course are encouraged to return to two of the schools. At one school the student may return for an occasional class and is not requested to pay. At the other school graduates are welcome but pay a nominal fee if they intend to take a large number of classes.

Personal Approaches to Voice Training

The teachers interviewed had trained at the Central School of Speech and Drama, the Royal Academy of Music, and the Rose Brueford School of Speech and Drama. They had received voice training from such teachers as Clifford Turner, Gwendolyn Thurburne, Cicely Berry, Heather Black, Marjorie Phillips, Robert Palmer, Katherine Fleming, and Elsie Fogerty. One of the voice teachers had studied privately with Clifford Turner and Rudolf Laban, while another's training included detailed study of anatomy and many years of study in the Alexander Technique. (At one time the major training ground for voice was the Central School of Speech and Drama.)

All of the teachers reported that they had altered their aproach to voice training over the past few years. One of the instructors feels that her teaching has been extended to include

movement and more use of text than in previous years. Another teacher talked about the evolution of voice training from an operatic background to its modern form, which is "more free." This instructor also spoke at length about the demise of the teaching and use of rib-reserve breathing. Another teacher, who has taught voice for twelve years, indicated "the need to continually modify one's work" and said that "it is important to adapt to change." A fourth noted that her approach and presentation have changed to suit a changing student body.

Some schools believe they offer a single point of view toward training the voice simple because the teachers have all had similar training; however, their personal teaching methods and approaches to the work vary. One school noted that its teachers are "unified on basics, but their approaches [as teachers] are very different." This school reported that it had taken ten years to become unified and that this had been a very difficult process. Another school believes that the Laban approach to both body and voice has helped to unify its basic training concepts and has contributed to teamwork within the faculty. A second teacher as this school indicated that the basic approach is the same with all tutors but that presentation varies according to the individual tutor's teaching methods.

When teachers were asked for individual statements of their philosophy or personal approach to training the voice, the replies varied. One teacher responded that she does not consider a voice trained unless its owner has a complete sensory understanding of her or his instrument. A second feels that "the actor today has

to be a physical and vocal acrobat" and must be able to play in a variety of styles and text; therefore, she trains her students to meet those demands. She added, "I contribute most when directing because as voice coach and director I can release the voice through the work on a production." A third teacher feels that "you can only teach from the person you are." This teacher makes use of much choral speaking, poetry, and games and believes that her teaching was heavily influenced by her own teachers. Primarily, she is "concerned with the body and voice coming together" and believes voice training is mandatory for period acting.

A fourth teacher spoke about "trying to produce a voice that is organic to the personality or character" being played. A fifth responded that "teaching is satisfying my curiosity as to what the student is physically constructed to produce and then making sure he has the ability to do what his imagination and psyche prompt him to do." The trained actor, he continued, "should be able to do everything he is called upon to do; [the actor] should make a journey toward the part, and not bring into every part what he himself happens to be." A final reply stated that the goal of training is "to develop the vocal potential of each student, keeping the individual quality."

Conclusion

Perhaps one of the most important findings of this study is that the voice training in all four schools tends to be eclectic. Although many of the teachers had studied at the same schools

and worked with the same teachers, they had gone on to modify the approaches that they had been taught. Consequently, there was no evidence of a "master approach." A school could embrace a single view in terms of the goals and objectives of its voice training, but each teacher brought her or his own approach to the achievement of those goals. This open and varied approach to training probably contributes to the variety of distinct and individual voices that can be heard today on the English stage.

Second, the study points up the role of voice training in each school's program: In all of the schools the voice work is at the core of the training program. Allocation of time to voice classes, as has been shown, is proportionately high, with some form of voice training being taught every day. The integration of voice, speech, body, and acting studies seems to help the actor synthesize her or his training.

The importance of voice training to the overall program can also be seen in the number of faculty members who teach voice. No school has fewer than four voice teachers, and some staff as many as eight. The addition of a voice therapist as a permanent staff member or as a consultant suggests that the school is concerned not only with the training but also with the care of the professional voice. Of all the students seen on stage (approximately 250), only one seemed to be suffering from any kind of vocal distress.

Third, the study reveals an extraordinary amount of teamwork among faculty and staff. Voice instructors team-teach with movement and acting instructors; faculty and staff meet frequently

to discuss students' needs and/or informally for morning tea break, lunch or formally for discussions and/or critiques. Faculty members seemed to actively support one another's work and it was not uncommon to see an acting teacher start a class with a body or voice warmup exercise.

Fourth, this study shows the value the schools place on small classes and tutorial time. All of the schools recognize voice work is personal, that each actor's instrument is unique and that the voice is part of the individual's personality. Small classes, abundant tutorial time, and small-group sessions all promote quality voice training.

Finally, this study suggests that the high standards of voice training found in these schools may be attributable in part to the variety of approaches a teacher is encouraged to explore. This openness to continual discovery and modification of teaching methods has helped both teacher and student recognize the importance of continued growth and change. Because teachers are continually modifying their teaching methods, the students find that yesterday's exercise done a little differently today provides a kinesthetic experience that may lead to a more open throat and freer sound.

A recent graduate working with a noted London company expressed it this way: "The training at school taught me to break through my personal boundaries and helped me with my struggle to stay open--and staying open is especially important in making vocal discoveries."

Notes

1. The Rose Brueford School of Speech and Drama, although located outside the city of London, is included in this study because its program closely resembles some of the programs found in the speech and drama departments of American colleges and universities. The Rose Brueford School offers a college degree, while the other schools offer graduating certificates or awards.

2. Cicely Berry, Voice and the Actor (New York: MacMillan, 1973).

3. Peter P. Denes and Elliot N. Pinson, The Speech Chain (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1973).

4. Virgil Anderson, Training the Speaking Voice (London: Oxford University Press, 1961); J. Clifford Turner, Voice and Speech in the Theatre (London: Pitman, 1950); W.A. Aiken, M.D., An Introduction to Phonology: The Voice (out of print).

5. Although rib-reserve breathing seemed out of date in the drama schools, one working graduate actor in his late 20's remarked in an interview that he frequently relies on rib-reserve breathing, particularly in scenes that demand a great deal of physical action while speaking. He also indicated that the training in his school had been outstanding in synthesizing breath/sound/feeling and that for him rib-reserve breathing was not in conflict with that training.

6. Turner, op. cit. See p. 38 for vowel chart.

7. See Berry's discussion of the bone prop, op. cit., pp. 49-50.

8. One instructor pointed out that the American students attending her school seem to lack articulation and diction skills.

9. See Berry's "Summary of Exercises," op. cit., pp. 137-141.

10. The catalog reads: "Where students fail to achieve Standard English, particularly in the case of overseas students, it is noted on the award."